

Design Review by the Boston Parks Commission

Section 7-4.11 - The 100' Rule

The City of Boston Municipal Code Section 7-4.11 (the “100’ rule”) requires the approval of the Parks Commission for all buildings and structures that are constructed or altered within 100 feet of a park or parkway. This code applies to all publicly owned parks and parkways.

The purpose of the Parks Commission review is to ensure that projects adjacent or proximate to parks are designed so that they do not negatively impact the quality of existing open space or the public realm. Development projects that are adjacent or proximate to publically accessible open space are able to capitalize on this relationship. The Parks Commission review process encourages developers and property owners to acknowledge the value of open space in the neighborhood, and consider how the project can contribute to improving the quality, character or ongoing maintenance and upkeep of that open space.

Final approval of the Parks Commission is granted after a project has been approved by all other agencies, such as the BRA, the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Landmarks Commission, the Conservation Commission, etc. This is to ensure that no further changes will happen to the final design of the project with relation to open space, without approval of the Parks Commission.

Review Criteria

The Parks Commission’s approval process typically includes a review of the following:

- Siting and site design
- Project context and adjacencies
- Height, massing and setbacks
- Design in the public realm and interface, streetscape, ingress / egress
- Shadow and wind impacts
- Density, uses and size of units
- Removal of existing significant vegetation, landscape plan and tree preservation
- Grading, drainage and storm water control
- Appropriateness of site design – design along park frontage, general layout and access, edge conditions, planting, materials, lighting, trash, fencing, walls, signage, etc.
- Application of low-impact site design / sustainable design principles
- Input gathered through community outreach efforts relevant to parks
- Mitigation for impacts and community contributions negotiated in the Article 80 Development Agreement.

Application

Applicable projects must obtain approval of the Parks Commission prior to receiving a building permit from the City. Projects that are small in scale may be reviewed administratively by staff. Please contact the Executive Secretary, Boston Parks Commission, 1010 Massachusetts Ave., Boston, MA 02118 at 617-961-3074 to determine if a project requires Commission review.

Review Process

The Parks Commission meets on the last Monday of each month at 10:00am at the Parks and Recreation Department, Third Floor, 1010 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, MA 02118.

Proponents are encouraged to meet with staff early in the City's review process. At the very latest, the following is the timeframe for submittal to be on the agenda for a hearing.

- First week of the month – Submit initial application to the Boston Parks Commission. The Parks Department will determine whether a project will be reviewed administratively by staff, or at a public hearing of the Parks Commission, depending on the scale of the project.
- Second week of the month - Submit a complete application package for staff review and possible meeting. Proponents will be notified as soon as possible if additional materials are required to complete the Commission application package. Insufficient information will mean deferral of a hearing.
- Third week of the month - Provide eight copies of the package by the end of the third week. Staff will prepare comments for the proponent and the Commission on the project.
- Last Monday of the month - The applicant team will present at the hearing. The team generally consists of a developer or / owner, architect and landscape architect. Plans should be presented at full scale, taped to or dry-mounted on foam-core presentation boards. Easels are generally available. With prior notice a projector and screen is available.

Submittals

Applications for project review should submit the items listed below to the Parks Commission.

Administrative Review: For renovations and small additions, please submit a locus map, site plan, elevations and renderings, and a landscape plan with a list of plant materials.

Commission Review: For new construction requiring a Commission hearing, please submit the items listed below, typically in booklets, each with a titled cover page, index page, narrative sections and graphic plans, (legible 11"x17" reduced plans bound in, or plans folded to no larger than 8.5"x11" inches are acceptable).

Materials for Parks Commission Review

Plan Information

- Context plan showing neighborhood locus and relevant park or parkway
- Existing conditions plan
- Building plans including the elevations and floor plans
- Site development plan describing specific materials, walks, driveways, parking, lighting fixtures, drainage treatment and fencing
- Plans showing grading, drainage and storm water control
- Plans showing vegetation removal and tree preservation, as well as landscape plan with locations and list of plant types by botanical genus, species, variety, size and quantity
- All engineered plans shall be dated, signed and stamped by a licensed engineer.

Narrative Information

- Project context and adjacencies
- Building type, whether commercial, industrial, institutional, office or residential
- Building program including square feet, height, stories, number and type of units, whether rental or condominium, description of common space, etc.
- Description of to whom the building will be marketed.
- Building services including storage, parking, (if applicable) trash collection and disposal
- Shadow and wind studies for buildings exceeding the height of adjacent structures
- Application of low-impact site design / sustainable design principles
- Evidence of community outreach, summary of input and documentation of support
- Commitments made for community benefit contributions
- Mitigation for impacts and community contributions negotiated in the Article 80 Development Agreement.

BOSTON PARKS COMMISSION
APPLICATION FORM FOR DESIGN REVIEW

City Ordinance 7-4.11 requires the approval of the Boston Parks Commission for all buildings or structures that are constructed or altered within 100 feet of a park or parkway.

Please complete and submit this form to start the review process. Staff will contact you to discuss further submittal requirements. For questions - please contact Carrie Marsh, Boston Parks Commission, 617-961-3074, carrie.marsh@boston.gov.

DATE: _____ ISD APPLICATION # _____

PROJECT NAME: _____

PROPERTY ADDRESS: _____

APPLICANT: _____

ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL: _____ PHONE: _____

PARK WITHIN 100': _____

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: _____

COMMUNITY OUTREACH: _____

STATUS OF APPROVALS:

Boston Redevelopment Authority

Zoning Board of Appeals

Boston Transportation Department

Public Improvement Commission

Boston Civic Design Commission

Boston Landmarks Commission

Boston Conservation Commission

Boston Art Commission

Boston Water and Sewer

State Agencies
